

Translated from 'Nordmændene i Amerika' by Martin Ulvestad  
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## **Dunn County, Wisconsin** p. 34-35

The first Norwegian settlement in this county was founded in the area of Elk Mound in 1859. Jacob Andreason, Hans Haagensen, Harold Tillesen, Gabriel Jensen and Henrik Nilsen, all from Bæreum were the first, they came from the Waupon settlement in Fond du Lac Co. Next after them came Ludvig Nilsen, Hans Ludvigsen, Jens Tillesen, Martin L. Howe and Even Bentsen, all from Bærum, Christian Christophersen and Engebrigt Sørensen from Ringerike, and Torsten Olsen from Hadeland. Only wild animals and Indians had their home in this area before the Norwegians came.

The settlement in Colfax and Sand Creek was established in 1862. Ole E. Running (from him, Running Valley gets its name) as well as Knud Salvesen and Nils Olsen were the first settlers here. Ole Running was from Skien. Next after these came Ole Larsen from Drammen, Gunnar Kinney from Telemarken and many more.

The land was covered in forests and therefore hard to clear, but they did - inch by inch. The nearest marketplace was Eau Claire and there they took the wheat, oats, potatoes and other products they harvested. Oxen - and Shank's mare was - naturally the only means of transportation. The sawmills paid 50-75 cents a day in those days, so it was not easy to get rich.

Mrs. Ole Torgersen, a pioneer woman from Menomonie writes, "I left Kristiania the 11th April 1868 on the sailship Hanna Par (Hannah Parr) and all went well for three weeks but then a hurricane blew up. The mainmast and one of the other masts broke right at the deck. Then a pilot came and conducted us into Lemrick (Limerick) Ireland where we remained for 6 weeks while the ship was repaired. We ate up our travelling food there and the captain had to buy provisions for us before we set to sea again. Arriving in Quebec, we had to wait for a while again before we could go further. While we were there a Valders boy drowned while swimming. The trip continued partly by train, that resembled cattle cars of our day, and partly by boat. We landed in La Crosse, Wis., and continued the trip up the Mississippi River to Reed's Landing, Minn. From there up the Chippewa River to Goose Lake, Peru Town, where Mrs. Torger Oleson and Mrs. Tore Lund came to lead me to my destination."

A pioneer man in Menomonie writes, "This happened long before the railway was built down to Menomonie and long before Menomonie was a city. There was a mixed train - one that carried both people and cattle and all the goods one needed - and stopped up on the hill. The worst was that it came and arrived when - or the driver - found it convenient. No one knew anything about a timetable. Then one day, we heard a whistle, and off it went with all those who wished to travel. Among these was old Pastor R. R. The others ran as fast as they could up the hill, but he neither could or would run. Quite the contrary, when he had gotten a way up, he stopped and sat down to rest, and he called to the others, 'Tell the conductor that Pastor R. R. is coming!' The rest of the story, one

can guess. The conductor did not wait. When the priest came up to the so-called station, he saw the back end of the train far off on the horizon, and that he was in a bad mood, he said himself. Later, when he became accustomed to American ways, he was amused by the occurrence. In this country, it helps little to shout one's title or position. He said himself that it was a bad habit that he had brought from Norway. But he, and others, brought many good habits from there."

Bærum's Lutheran congregation, that was founded in Elk Mound in the 60s, was the first Norwegian congregation in this county. In 1878, it built a church. Now there are 19 Norwegian congregations and 16 churches, 8 of them belong to The Norwegian Synod, 8 to The United Church, 2 to The Lutheran Free Church and 1 to The Evangelical Free Church.

Samuel Omdahl, Menonomie was the first Norwegian to hold a public position in Dunn Co., when he was elected sheriff in 1874.

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